

## Helping others to help you

Be prepared to tell strangers that you sometimes have difficulty. Explain to family and friends, as precisely as possible, what makes it difficult to hear. For example, noise (radio, television, traffic), the use of unfamiliar words, their speed of talking, abrupt changes of topic etc.

Say what helps. For example, their talking slowly and clearly but not exaggerating their lip movements, using a loud voice but not shouting, catching your attention before speaking to you, turning and facing you when talking and introducing the topic that is being discussed. Explain to them that when you have missed something it can help if they repeat the sentence or if they express the same idea again in different words.

For example, if you have missed "What was the weather like on your holiday?" They could try saying "Did you have lots of sunshine while you were in Spain?"

## Be positive

Good communication needs the efforts of both the speaker and the listener. Always show your appreciation when people have shown consideration of your difficulties or given you help in the ways described here. This makes them more likely to do so again.

It doesn't help you to complain that people don't speak clearly nowadays or that you get left out, although sometimes that can seem true. Saying what does help you makes it more likely they will do it again.

## How to contact us

Doncaster  
and Mexborough

### Hearing Rehabilitation Centre

Chequer Road Clinic  
Chequer Road  
Doncaster  
DN1 2AD

Tel: 01302 644950

Fax: 01302 644956

Text: 07796174900

Email: [hearing.rehab@dbh.nhs.uk](mailto:hearing.rehab@dbh.nhs.uk)

Retford  
and Bassetlaw

### Hearing Services

Retford Hospital  
North Road  
Retford  
Nottinghamshire  
DN22 7XF

Tel: 01777 863306

Fax: 01777 862380

Text: 07787263274

Email: [hearing.reford@dbh.nhs.uk](mailto:hearing.reford@dbh.nhs.uk)

[www.dbh.nhs.uk](http://www.dbh.nhs.uk)

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust



NHS Audiology &  
Adult Hearing Services

## Communication Tips



Information for Patients

## Use your eyes

Make sure that you can see the face of the person you are talking with. Watch their lips - this gives vital information about what is being said. If the person's face is in shadow, lip reading will be more difficult.

Always try to position yourself so the light falls on the face of the person talking. Try not to have anything between you and the other person that might obscure your view of their face.

Move closer to the person who is speaking, but not so close as to make them feel uneasy – the ideal distance is between 3 and 6 feet.

Don't try to shout from another room – communication is very difficult if the speaker and the listener are in different rooms.

## Controlling and coping with noise

When having a conversation, try to keep the background noise to a minimum. Avoid corridors, roadsides and pubs when they are full and busy – suggest going to a quiet room to talk.

At home it will help to have heavy furnishings such as heavy curtains and carpets. In a hall, church or theatre, sit close to the front or close to a loudspeaker.

If noise is causing a problem, try to put yourself between the noise and the person talking, so that the speech and noise come from different directions.

If your hearing is not the same in both ears, it helps to turn your better side towards the person speaking.

## Body Language

Many people are as expressive with their hands and face as they are with their words. So take note of the speaker's facial expressions and gestures.

They help to illustrate the speaker's topic, attitude and also their mood and feelings.

Their tone of voice, speed of talking and stress on particular words also give clues.

You can probably encourage family and friends to use gestures more.

## Listening to the radio or television

When listening to talk programmes, adjust the controls of your radio to achieve a sound balance that is best for you. Usually it is easier to understand speech if there is more 'treble' and less 'bass'.

This is also less disturbing to people in neighbouring rooms. The tone settings may need to be changed for music, which requires relatively more 'bass', and then changed back again for a talk programme.

With television, getting the volume setting that suits you but does not disturb others is important.

Too high a volume distorts the sound. It is usually better if the radio or television is in a corner or against a wall and not by a window or a curtain.

It may be possible for you to sit closer to a television or more towards the side of its loudspeaker than others would.

## Keep calm!

Do not expect to hear every word. You will pick up key words which enable you to grasp the message. Do not get upset by how much you have missed.

Remember that no one hears correctly all the time and that everyone makes mistakes of hearing – especially in company and in noisy surroundings.

When you are finding it difficult, try to keep calm. If you become anxious or flustered it may make matters worse and interfere with lip reading.

## Conversational Skills

In any conversation the speaker needs to receive some reaction from the listener. Nod or comment to show when you have heard or understood; you can frown, look puzzled, or ask questions if you have not heard clearly.

When the other person is telling you something important, confirm that you have heard by asking a reverse question.

For example, if the speaker has suggested meeting you, check by saying "so that's the 20th June then, the Wednesday afternoon?" This gives you a chance to check the details.

It also lets the speaker know that you do have some difficulties in hearing, but that you are able to follow and participate if they make themselves clear.

When trying to get more information, repeat some of the words you did hear. For example, "Where did you say Peter was going?" "How long did you say it would take?" Try avoid saying "What" all the time.